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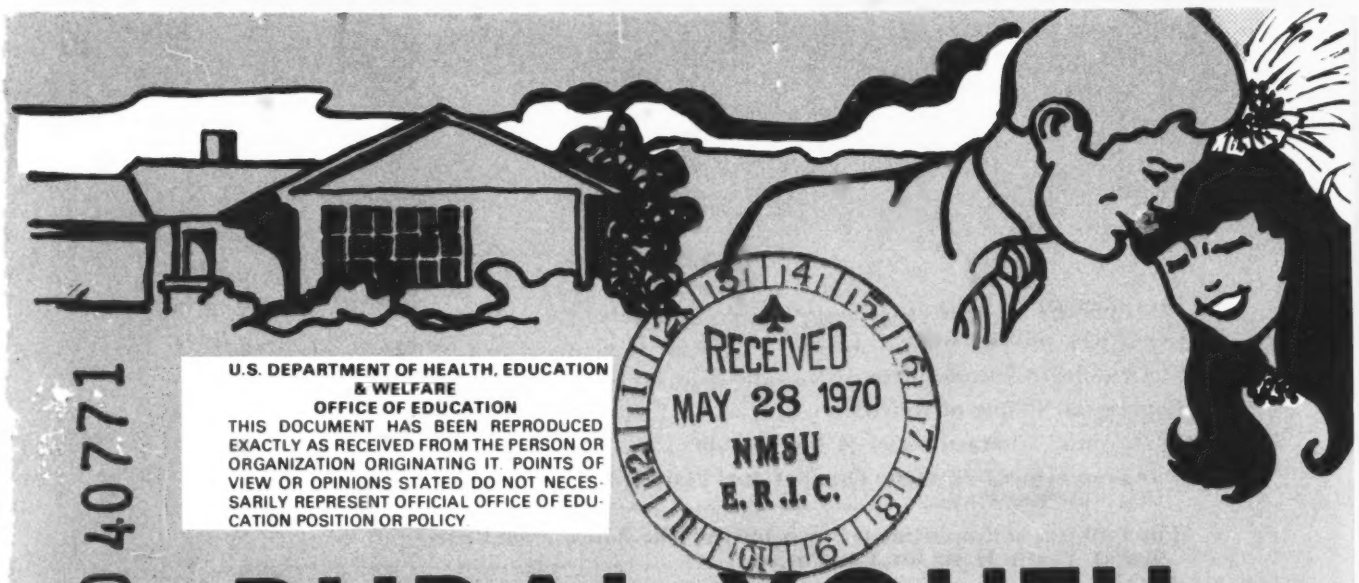
ABSTRACT

The study was an attempt to discern what rural youth in Louisiana expect to achieve in the future. Objectives of the study were to determine, with reference to race and sex differences, (1) future occupational plans, (2) educational plans, (3) type of community rural youth expected to settle in, and (4) desired age for marriage and number of children expected. The techniques used for gathering data on the 544 seniors (330 white and 214 black) in 20 high schools were questionnaires and group interviews. It was found that the majority of the male seniors, both black and white, planned to enter professional, semi-skilled, or skilled occupations, while 4 out of 10 of the females, both black and white, planned for a professional occupation. Seven out of 10 of all males planned to continue their education, while more black females than white planned on additional education after high school. All male respondents' plans for residence were similar, while more black females than white females planned on urban living. Black males wanted to marry younger, but all male respondents wanted from 2 to 4 children. The white female expected to marry younger than the black female and desired 5 or more children as opposed to only 2 children expected by the black female. (LS)



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RURAL YOUTH PLAN AHEAD

A Study of the Occupational, Educational, Residential and Marital Expectations of Rural Youth in Louisiana

Pedro F. Hernandez
J. Steven Picou

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Rural Youth Plan Ahead

A Study of the Occupational, Educational, Residential And Marital Expectations of Rural Youth in Louisiana

PEDRO F. HERNÁNDEZ AND J. STEVEN PICOU*

Introduction

Current social trends have precipitated many problems for the rural youth of America. Technological innovations have definitely curtailed occupational opportunities in rural areas for youth. Increased farm mechanization has been accompanied by an overall increase in the size of farms, which in turn has steadily reduced the labor demand in rural agricultural areas.[1] The fact that "only about 10 per cent of rural youth coming of age in the 1960's can look forward to farming for a living" indicates that these youths are confronted with serious problems concerning their occupational future.[2]

It is clear from the above that increasing numbers of rural youths are compelled to seek employment in urban areas. The implications of this fact are twofold. First, because more employment opportunities exist in the city, rural youth are compelled to migrate in order to secure jobs. Thus, unlike their urban counterparts, rural youth are confronted with the problem of leaving their community of orientation and adjusting to the urban environment. Second, within urban areas job opportunities in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations are rapidly declining. This means that, in order to be occupationally successful, rural youth must have the educational or vocational training necessary for placement in the professional, technical, and skilled occupations available in the city. In summary, occupational achievement for the vast majority of rural youths is contingent upon migration and educational plans.

Furthermore, the migration and educational plans of rural young people may cause other, more immediate, personal life goals to be

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The research reported herein was conducted as a part of Regional Project S-61, a project concerned with studying the development and mobility of rural people in 10 southern states.

The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs. Margery Coxe, graduate student, in the tabulation of the data in this report.

[1]For an example of the magnitude and implications of this trend in Louisiana, see: Adriaan K. Constandse, Pedro F. Hernández and Alvin L. Bertrand, *Some Implications of Increasing Farm Technology in Louisiana* (La. State Univ., Agr. Exp. Station, Bull. No. 628, August 1968), pp. 38-39.

[2]Samuel V. Merrick, "Perspective on Rural Youth Employment," Ruth C. Nash (editor), *Rural Youth in a Changing Environment* (Washington, D.C.: National Committee for Children and Youth, 1965), p. 103.

modified. For example, plans for higher education may impinge on marital plans, causing the latter to be postponed until graduation from college.

Rural youth in Louisiana are no exception to the problems discussed above. In Louisiana, from 1950 to 1966, cash receipts from farm marketing increased 65.9 per cent. In spite of this increase in output, the number of hired farm workers in Louisiana decreased from 68,000 in 1950 to 39,000 in 1966. In addition, total farm employment dropped from 213,000 to 107,000. (See Table 1.) Thus, in the state, over a recent 16-year period, technological advances stimulated a 65.9 per cent increase in farm marketing while concomitantly reducing total farm employment by 46.9 per cent. These figures indicate that many of Louisiana's rural youths will be forced to secure future employment in urban sectors of the state.

It is clear that Louisiana's rural youth are faced with making decisions that are crucial to their future. This report presents the major findings of a study on the occupational, educational, marital, and residential plans of a sample of black and white rural, high school seniors in Louisiana. It is hoped that the findings of this study will benefit those educators, educational administrators, and other persons within and outside the state of Louisiana concerned with the proper guidance of rural youth.

TABLE 1.—Farm Workers in Louisiana, 1950, 1960-66

Year	Total Workers	Family Workers	Hired Workers
	Thousands		
1950	213	145	68
1960	153	99	58
1961	156	92	64
1962	144	87	57
1963	141	82	59
1964	133	78	55
1965	121	71	50
1966	107	68	39

Source: United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, *Farm Labor*, 1951-1967.

Objectives of the Study

This study was undertaken to provide information on the social characteristics of seniors in rural high schools as well as their occupational, educational, residential, and marital plans. In other words, an attempt was made to discern what the rural youth of Louisiana expect to achieve in the future.

The specific objectives of this study were:

(1) To determine the future occupational plans of rural youth in Louisiana with particular reference to race and sex differences.

(2) To determine the future educational plans of rural youth in Louisiana with particular reference to race and sex differences.

(3) To determine the type of communities in which rural youth plan to settle, with particular reference to race and sex differences.

(4) To determine the future marital plans of rural youth, emphasizing desired ages for marriage and number of children expected, with particular reference to race and sex differences.

(5) To provide a better understanding of the plans Louisiana's rural youth have for their future.

Methodological Procedures

The major aim of the research design for this study was to get a representative sample of rural high school seniors in Louisiana. In order to accomplish this goal, schools were chosen by the use of a "stratified cluster" sampling design.[3] The state was first divided into four broad regions. Within each region the researchers constructed a list of all existing rural school zones. From this list 20 rural schools were randomly selected.

The data for this study were collected in the spring of 1968 through the group interview technique. All seniors who attended school on the days interviews were conducted were included in the sample. No attempt was made to contact seniors who were absent the day questionnaires were administered.

Altogether a total of 544 rural high school seniors were interviewed. By race, there were 330 white students and 214 black students included in the sample. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the sample by area, parish, number of students interviewed, and race.

Conceptual Frame of Reference

The conceptual frame of reference employed in this study is based on the "developmental model."[4] As children become older and more mature, their conceptions about future achievements become increasingly realistic. For example, the child of 8 or 9 has grandiose ideas about his future. That is, he wants to become a cowboy or an astronaut. At this time, his future projections are merely fantasies.

However, as the child grows older his plans for the future begin to assume "realistic" qualities. By the twelfth grade, definite plans for the future begin to crystalize. The youth must now seriously consider future vocational alternatives. Along with vocational choice, other decisions must be made, such as whether or not to continue his education, to marry, or to move out of the community in which he was raised.

From the perspective outlined above, it is apparent that the high school senior is a decision-maker. The decisions youths arrive at concerning their future are influenced by a number of sources. General societal values, family group influences, peer group influences, and the influence of the complex mass communication system in our society all condition to some extent the decisions made by youths. In addition to the influence of the norms and values of society and immediate ref-

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[3]Leslie Kish, "Selection of the Sample," Leon Festinger and Donald Katz (editors), *Research Methods in the Behavioriorial Sciences* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1953), p. 220 ff.

[4]Eli Ginzberg, *et al., Occupational Choice: An Approach to a General Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), p. 16 ff.

TABLE 2.—Delineation of the Sample by Area, Parish, Number of Students, and Race

Area and Parish	Interviewed Seniors		
	White	Black	Total
NORTHEAST			
West Carroll	23	–	
Richland	65	–	
Franklin	–	27	
Tensas	32	–	
LaSalle	18	–	
Total	138	27	165
NORTHWEST			
DeSoto (School No. 1)	–	67	
DeSoto (School No. 2)	12	–	
Natchitoches (School No. 1)	–	13	
Natchitoches (School No. 2)	21	–	
Natchitoches (School No. 3)	14	–	
Total	47	80	127
SOUTHWEST			
Avoyelles (School No. 1)	17	–	
Avoyelles (School No. 2)	–	57	
Avoyelles (School No. 3)	35	–	
Evangeline (School No. 1)	–	16	
Evangeline (School No. 2)	–	18	
Total	52	91	143
SOUTHEAST			
Pointe Coupee (School No. 1)	27	–	
Pointe Coupee (School No. 2)	30	–	
Ascension	19	–	
Livingston	17	–	
Plaquemines	–	16	
Total	93	16	109
TOTAL	330	214	544

erence groups, the decisions high school seniors make are also affected by numerous individuals who serve as personal role-models for future behavior patterns.

Furthermore, the high school youth's decisions regarding the future are influenced by his self-concept, which is a product of group experiences. The youth's evaluation of his own potentialities is an important factor in the formation of his future plans.[5]

Leading researchers on the status orientations of youth have noted that it is important to distinguish between the aspirations and the expectations that youth have for the future.[6] Aspirations are desires youth hold for the attainment of particular goals. On the other hand, an expectation is the youth's realistic anticipation of future achievement in

[5]Leona Tyler, *The Work of the Counselor* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 2nd. ed., 1961), p. 290.

[6]William P. Kuvlesky and Robert C. Bealer, "A Clarification of the Concept Occupational Choice'," *Rural Sociology*, 31 (September 1966), pp. 265-276.

a particular area. In other words, an aspiration is a desire, while an expectation is a realistic plan, which may or may not be desired.

For the purposes of this study, we are concerned solely with the future occupational, educational, migrational, and marital expectations (plans) of rural youth. The future plans of the rural youth presented on the following pages are viewed as a result of the various social influences that a youth experiences throughout maturation.

Background Characteristics of the Sample

As previously noted, a total of 544 rural black and white high school seniors residing in 16 Louisiana parishes made up the sample for this study. The median age for the white students was 17.4 years, while the median age for the black students was 17.6 years.

The vast majority of the rural youths involved in this study came from families of low socio-economic status. Table 3 shows that 46 per cent of the major wage earners in the families of the respondents were employed in either semi-skilled or unskilled occupations. Furthermore, 20 per cent of the major wage earners in the families of the respondents were unemployed at the time this study was conducted. A most surprising finding was that only one of the workers in these rural families was employed as a farm operator.

TABLE 3.—Occupational Categories of Major Wage Earners in Families of the Respondents

Occupational Category	Per Cent
Professional	5
Owner-manager	9
Clerical and sales	2
Skilled	16
Semi-skilled	26
Unskilled	21
Farm operator	1
Unemployed	20
Total	100

For purposes of analysis, the eight occupational categories in Table 3 were collapsed into three major occupational levels. It was found (Table 4) that approximately 7 out of 10 of the major money earners in the respondents' families were employed in lower class occupations.[7] Interestingly, of the 27 per cent of the major wage earners in the middle level, 16 per cent were employed in skilled occupations. Almost all of the individuals in the professional category were employed as primary or secondary school teachers.

Table 5 provides a picture of the educational levels of the respondents' parents by race. The vast majority of the parents of the respon-

[7]The lower class occupational level includes those major money earners in the families of the respondents who were unemployed at the time this study was conducted.

TABLE 4.—Occupational Levels of Major Wage Earners in Families of the Respondents

Occupational Level	Per Cent
Upper	5
Middle	27
Lower	68
Total	100

dents were found to have only a high school education or less. It was also found that the educational attainment of the black students' parents was considerably lower than that of the parents of the white students. For example, 22 per cent of the fathers of white students had at least attended a college or trade school. In contrast, only 6 per cent of the fathers of black students had attained a similar level of education. In addition, 60 per cent of the black fathers and 38 per cent of the black mothers had gone no higher in school than the seventh grade.

TABLE 5.—Educational Levels of Respondents' Parents by Race

Educational Level Attained by Parent	White (N=274)		Negro (N=190)	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
	Per Cent			
Completed college and higher	8	9	3	7
Some college but not degree	10	6	3	4
Technical school	4	5	0	4
Completed high school	22	30	6	9
Grades 8-11	31	32	28	38
Grades 1-7	21	9	46	23
No school	4	9	14	15
Total	100	100	100	100

The families of the black students were found to be characterized by higher rates of instability than the families of the white students. Table 6 reveals that 86 per cent of the white students were members of a complete family system, whereas only 62 per cent of the black students were living in households which included both parents.

TABLE 6.—Marital Status of Respondents' Parents by Race

Marital Status	White (N=324)	Black (N=209)
	Per Cent	
Both alive, living together	86	62
Both alive, separated	2	16
Both alive, divorced	4	9
Father dead	5	9
Mother dead	3	4
Total	100	100

In summary, the analysis of the general background characteristics of the respondents' families indicated that most of the rural black and

white students interviewed came from socially disadvantaged families. Very few of the respondents' parents had attained a high occupational or educational level. The majority of the major money earners in the families of the respondents held lower class occupations, and few of the respondents' parents had attained education beyond high school. Proportionately more black parents than white parents had low educational attainment. Black families were also found to be characterized by higher rates of instability or broken homes.

The Employment Problem: Occupational Plans Rural Youth Have for the Future

The decision to enter a specific occupation has many implications for a high school youth. For example, in order to become a doctor, a youth must continue his education beyond high school anywhere from eight to twelve years. Likewise, a decision to become a nurse, teacher, machinist, or professional athlete affects the nature of an individual's future social relationships and to a great extent determines his "social identity."

Furthermore, varying amounts of prestige and status are associated with different occupations. People tend to evaluate individuals on the basis of their occupational achievements. It is an observable fact in our society that a medical doctor is usually accorded more status than a truck driver.

Equally true is the fact that occupations differ in terms of financial rewards. It is common knowledge that a medical doctor usually has a considerably larger income than the truck driver. The skilled carpenter ordinarily is the recipient of a larger paycheck than the unskilled laborer.

In addition, it should be noted that the personal satisfaction and enjoyment an individual receives from his job is also an important consideration in the formation of the occupational plans by youth. Entrance into a "rewarding" occupation, whether it is a white collar or blue collar job, is very important for the proper social adjustment of the individual.

In this section the occupational plans of the black and white rural youths involved in this study will be analyzed. The occupations designated by the respondents were classified and ranked according to a modified version of the census scheme.[8] The occupational plans of the male and female respondents will be reported separately and racial comparisons made within both sex categories.

Table 7 shows that the occupational plans of the rural black and white males were very similar. The vast majority of all the male high school seniors anticipated entering either professional, semi-skilled, or skilled occupations. Approximately 3 out of every 10 males from each race category expected future employment in professional occupations.

[8]The occupational ranking scheme employed in this study is similar to the classification method utilized by the United States Bureau of the Census. Modifications were made by combining similar occupational categories. This procedure was carried out in order to facilitate the analysis of the data.

TABLE 7.—Occupational Plans of Rural High School Senior Males by Race

Occupational Category	White Males (N=149)	Black Males (N=67)
	Per Cent	
Professional	30	31
Owner-manager	13	6
Glamour	3	5
Clerical and sales	2	8
Skilled	19	18
Semi-skilled	28	25
Unskilled	5	6
Farm operator	0	1
Total	100	100

Professional occupations chosen most frequently by the respondents were school teacher and engineer. Table 7 also reveals that 28 per cent of the male white students and 25 per cent of the male black students expected to hold future jobs in the semi-skilled occupational category. Most of the respondents in this category planned to be heavy equipment operators or plant workers.

It was also found that 19 per cent of the male white students planned to enter skilled occupations. Occupations such as auto mechanic and plumber were among those most frequently chosen. Indicative of current occupational trends was the finding that only one black male planned to work as a farm operator.

The occupational plans of the black and white females fell mainly into two categories. Table 8 reveals that 82 per cent of both the white and black females interviewed planned on securing employment in either professional or clerical and sales occupations. This finding is not considered unusual due to the fact that most job opportunities for females exist in these two categories.

Slightly more black females (48 per cent) than white females (40 per

TABLE 8.—Occupational Plans of Rural High School Senior Females by Race*

Occupational Category	White Females (N=115)	Black Females (N=105)
	Per Cent	
Professional	40	48
Owner-manager	1	5
Glamour	3	4
Clerical and sales	42	34
Skilled	12	11
Semi-skilled	2	1
Unskilled	2	1
Farm operator	0	0
Total	100	100

*Further exploration was done, in regard to occupational plans (expected employment), by collapsing the responses into two groups according to race.

The Kruskal-Wallis statistical test showed that there was a significant difference between races in their expectations: "H" statistic = 29.68, significant at 0.001 level of significance, for df = 3. This means that something in the fact of being white or black affected the various plans for occupation, which was not due to chance.

cent) planned on future professional occupations. Professional occupations most frequently chosen by all girls were school teacher and registered nurse. Forty-two per cent of the white females and 34 per cent of the black females anticipated work in clerical and sales occupation. Office secretary, typist, and stenographer were singled out by the respondents as the clerical and sales occupations anticipated most frequently.

The Problem of Employment Prerequisites: The Educational Plans Rural Youth Have for the Future

In modern society, education is seen as an intervening factor between man and employment. In order to secure financially rewarding, prestigious jobs, contemporary youth are faced with the problem of securing formal training, which often entails college and graduate study. It is becoming increasingly essential for youths planning to enter technical and skilled jobs to obtain formal vocational training.

The problem of educational attainment is a crucial one for disadvantaged rural youths. If a rural youth fails to receive a college degree or some type of formal vocational training, his chances for upward social mobility are seriously impaired. Joseph Kahl has cogently pointed out that a Bachelor's degree provides one with an admission ticket to middle class occupations.[9] This fact is of special importance to the rural youth who, more often than not, comes from a lower class family.

In this section the educational plans of the black and white rural students involved in this study will be analyzed. All students were asked to indicate whether they planned to quit high school immediately, complete high school, attend a vocational school, attend a junior college, graduate from a four-year college, or do graduate work. The educational plans of the respondents are reported in terms of racial comparisons for both sex categories.

It was found that 77 per cent of both the Negro and white males planned to continue their education in one form or another after high school. Table 9 reveals that 37 per cent of the white males and 30 per cent of the Negro males anticipated graduating from a four-year college or university. An additional 12 per cent of the whites and 17 per cent of the Negroes expected to complete graduate work in a chosen field. Thus, almost half of all the rural males interviewed planned to obtain at least one college degree. It is apparent that the rural males interviewed viewed educational achievement as an important factor in their future.

Twenty-six per cent of both the black and white males indicated that they planned some formal type of vocational training after high school. Most of these students undoubtedly plan on pursuing a skilled occupation in the future. Interestingly enough, approximately 2 out of every 10 of the white and black males planned no additional educational training beyond high school. Apparently these youths will be forced into

[9]Joseph A. Kahl, *The American Class Structure* (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 276-278.

TABLE 9.—Educational Plans of Rural High School Senior Males by Race

Level of Educational Attainment Planned	White Males (N=167)	Black Males (N=91)
	Per Cent	
Graduate work	12	17
Graduate from college	37	30
Junior college	2	4
Business or vocational school	26	26
Complete high school	22	20
Quit high school immediately	1	3
Total	100	100

competition for rapidly disappearing unskilled occupations. The occupational future for these youths appears questionable in view of the occupational opportunities that exist today.

There was a noticeable difference between the educational plans of the white and black females involved in this study. Table 10 reveals that 28 per cent of the black females, in contrast with only 7 per cent of the white females, had plans to do graduate work in college. It was also found that more white girls (35 per cent) than black girls (21 per cent) expected to obtain a college degree. Generally, more black females (88 per cent) than white females (74 per cent) planned to receive some type of formal educational training after high school.

TABLE 10.—Educational Plans of Rural High School Senior Females by Race

Level of Educational Attainment Planned	White Females (N=157)	Negro Females (N=123)
	Per Cent	
Graduate work	7	28
Graduate from college	35	21
Junior college	3	11
Business or vocational school	29	28
Complete high school	25	10
Quit high school immediately	1	2
Total	100	100

The Migration Problem: The Future Residence Plans of Rural Youth

Donald J. Boque and Calvin L. Beale, among others, have noted that current rural-urban migration trends are characterized by a "rapid concentration of the majority of the nation's people into metropolitan areas."[10] Within the state of Louisiana, researchers have found that from 1950 to 1960 "there were high rates of net *in* migration for all age-race-sex groups" to urban areas and "high rates of net *out* migration for all

[10]Donald J. Boque and Calvin L. Beale, "Recent Population Trends in the United States and Their Causes," James H. Copp (editor), *Our Changing Rural Society* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press), p. 123.

such groups in rural areas."[11] Furthermore, every year many rural Negroes leave Louisiana, moving to large northern and West Coast cities.

Most of the people leave rural areas in order to secure better employment. Rural youth face the problem of diminishing employment opportunities within their local communities. If the young rural high school graduate is going to find employment, more often than not his only chance for getting a job is in a nearby urban area. Furthermore, rural youngsters who plan to get a college education realize that the top salaries in the business world are offered in the city.

However, it should be noted that individuals have personal values and preferences that go a long way in determining their future. An individual may value the rural environment so highly that he may decide against leaving his community of orientation, despite the occupational and financial advantages of the city. Accordingly, individuals may plan on residing in a small city or spreading, complex metropolis. In other words, a rural youth has many alternatives in selecting future residence. The choice made rests on the personal values and the desires and preferences of the individual.

Of the male high school seniors involved in this study, more blacks (62 per cent) than whites (52 per cent) planned to reside in cities (Table 11). The major difference between the residence plans of the black and the white males was that considerably more blacks (29 per cent) planned on living in large metropolitan areas than did whites (6 per cent). On the other hand, 46 per cent of the white males indicated that they planned on living in a small city, while only 33 per cent of the black males expected similar residences. Approximately 3 out of every 10 of the Negro and white students planned to reside in rural non-farm areas.

TABLE 11.—Residence Plans of Rural High School Senior Males by Race

Residence Plans	White Males (N=130)	Black Males (N=86)
	Per Cent	
Metropolitan area	6	29
Small city	46	33
Town or village	9	2
Open country, non-farm	30	29
Farm	9	7
Total	100	100

In Table 12 the residence plans of the respondents were collapsed into the general categories of rural and urban so that indications of future migration trends would be more obvious. It was found that ap-

[11]Roger L. Buford, Alvin L. Bertrand and Walfrid J. Jokinen, *Louisiana's Human Resources, Part IV: Migration of Working Aged Population*, Bulletin No. 595, Louisiana State University, Agricultural Experiment Station, (May 1965), p. 9.

TABLE 12.—Rural-Urban Classification of the Residence Plans of Rural High School Senior Males by Race

Residence Plans	White Males (N=180)	Black Males (N=86)
	Per Cent	
Urban	61	64
Rural	39	36
Total	100	100

proximately 6 out of 10 of all the male rural students involved in this study planned to move to some type of urban area in the future. This finding indicates that rural males will probably still be leaving their community of orientation at substantial rates in the future.

Table 13 shows that substantially more black females (36 per cent) than white females (10 per cent) planned to live in large metropolitan areas. Most of the white females (80 per cent) planned to reside in small urban and rural non-farm areas, while most of the black females (84 per cent) anticipated living in large metropolitan and small urban areas.

TABLE 13.—Residence Plans of Rural High School Senior Females by Race

Residence Plans	White Females (N=148)	Black Females (N=118)
	Per Cent	
Metropolitan area	10	36
Small city	53	48
Town or village	1	1
Open country, non-farm	27	13
Farm	9	2
Total	100	100

By collapsing the data on the residence plans of the rural females into rural and urban categories, it was found that substantially more black females than white females planned on living in urban areas (Table 14). More than 8 out of 10 of all the Negro females anticipated residing in some type of urban area. However, the finding that 64 per cent of the white females planned to live in an urban setting is similar to the residence plans of the white and black males discussed above.

TABLE 14.—Rural-Urban Classification of the Residence Plans of Rural High School Senior Females by Race

Residence Plans	White Females (N=148)	Negro Females (N=118)
	Per Cent	
Urban	64	85
Rural	36	15
Total	100	100

The Problem of Getting Married and Having A Family: The Marital and Procreational Plans Rural Youth Have for the Future

All high school youth realize that someday they will probably get married and have children. However, the answer to the problems of exactly when to get married and how many children to have is contingent upon a number of other factors.

In contemporary society there is a tendency toward marriage at an early age. This fact creates a dilemma for young people who are planning to attend college. Should marriage be immediate or postponed until after graduation?

Furthermore, modern family planning methods bring to fore the problem of how many children are desirable for a family. Should the number of children be consistent with the financial resources of the parents? Just as important, how does one determine just what is an ideal ratio of income to number of children?

It is apparent that marital plans are affected by, and in turn, affect, the occupational and educational plans of high school youth. In this section of this report, an analysis of the ages rural youth consider desirable for marriage will be presented. In addition, an analysis of the number of children the respondents expect to have in their future families is included.

In Table 15 a comparison of the ages all respondents preferred for marriage is presented by race and sex categories. It was found that black males and females desired to put off marriage longer than their white counterparts. Slightly more than half of the black males (53 per cent) desired to get married after 25, while only 34 per cent of the white males had similar desires. White males generally preferred to get married between the ages 20 and 24. Both black and white males indicated that getting married prior to the twentieth birthday was undesirable.

Noticeable differences between black and white females were also found in the preferred ages for marriage (Table 15). White females tended to prefer marriage at an earlier age than their Negro counterparts. It was found that 20 per cent of the white females considered marriage prior to their twentieth birthday as desirable. In contrast, only 6 per cent of the black females held a similar preference. Furthermore,

TABLE 15.—Preferred Ages for Marriage of the Rural Senior High School Respondents by Race and Sex

Age	Males		Females	
	White (N=156)	Negro (N=85)	White (N=149)	Negro (N=115)
	Per Cent			
Below 20	6	2	20	7
20-24	60	45	74	63
25 and greater	34	53	6	30
Total	100	100	100	100

substantially more black girls (30 per cent) than white girls (6 per cent) preferred marriage after the age of 25. Overall, the vast majority of both the white and black female respondents considered marrying between the ages of 20 and 24 as ideal.

Table 16 presents a breakdown of number of children expected in the future families of the respondents by race and sex categories. The majority of all the students indicated that they planned on having from two to four children in the future. White and black males had relatively similar procreation plans, while white females appeared to expect slightly larger families than black females. For the female respondents, 17 per cent of the whites planned on having five or more children. In contrast, only 6 per cent of the black females anticipated having this many children. Furthermore, proportionately more black females (48 per cent) than white females (25 per cent) expressed plans for two or fewer children.

TABLE 16.—Number of Children Expected in the Future Families of the Rural Senior High School Respondents by Race and Sex

Number of Children Expected	Males		Females	
	White (N=167)	Negro (N=91)	White (N=157)	Negro (N=123)
	Per Cent			
None	9	6	7	6
One	3	3	3	3
Two	26	31	15	39
Three	27	10	20	18
Four	24	35	38	28
Five or more	12	15	17	6
Total	100	100	100	100

Goals and Values

Our expectations have to do with the goals and values we establish in our lives. A balanced perception of such goals and values has two complementary points of view. One is the point of view of the societal system, funneled and presented to individuals in the frame of family living and peer-group associations—the so-called "expected-self," that is, the image of the person as presented to him by the group. The other is the point of view of the individual, or the personal reaction to such an "expected-self."

An attempt to associate these two views is the exploration of things which may be perceived by the youngsters as being important in life. A question like this was posed to the interviewed persons, namely: "Rank these things (listed below) that most people look forward to in order of their importance to you."

The answer to such a question implies two or maybe three insights which seem to be extremely relevant. The first is the insight into the group opinion and perception of well-recognized American social values. Because of the emergence of contemporary youth crises and various youth movements, this insight may also be coupled with a need for

revision of commonly accepted values and/or value-orientations which are still prevalent in sociological literature concerning American value-systems. Furthermore, an insight into a sort of projective test of personal value-orientations prevalent among the different relevant groups (by sex and race) can also be achieved. All this shows a higher degree of complexity in interpreting the findings of the survey.

Three findings are among the most revealing ones in a general perspective:

1. The almost overwhelming priority and concern for education among the youngsters, well above other worthy things of life.
2. The lower concern and importance of going into marriage and raising a family.
3. Finally, a decreasing concern for wealth and big money earnings among the youngsters, if compared with most of the well-known studies of societal value-orientations in America.

Wanted residence and material things, which ranked even lower than big money earnings, appear to confirm the last point. These three items, which particularly relate to what one could label "material comfort" in life (money, residence, and wealth), seem to call for a revision of cliches which are a commonplace in sociological literature of classes, education, and values, and also for more scientific literature on opinion sampling and exploration of youth crisis.

Table 17 provides an overview of the elementary scaling of perceived goals.

TABLE 17.—Louisiana Rural High School Seniors: Their Scale of Preferences for Things They Consider Important in Life

Item	Scale of Preferences			
	White		Black	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Enjoy free time	1	2	2	4
Education	2	1	1	1
To have the job they want	3	3	3	2
Money	4	6	5	3
To possess many things	6	5	5	6
To live where they please	5	4	4	5
To have a family and children	7	7	6(=7)	7

Summary of Findings

This study has concentrated on four problem areas in which rural youths are forced to make crucial decisions regarding their future. Knowledge of this sort is important because the disadvantaged social position of the vast majority of rural youths necessitates some understanding of their future plans. The findings of this study in regard to the future occupational, educational, residential, and marital plans of rural youth in Louisiana may be summarized as follows:

1. The majority of the male high school seniors planned to enter

either "professional," "semi-skilled," or "skilled" occupations. Professional occupations were chosen most often by the male respondents. Approximately 3 out of 10 of both the black and white high school seniors anticipated future employment as professionals. The professional occupations chosen most often by the respondents were teacher and engineer, respectively. Both the black and white males involved in this study had relatively similar occupational plans for the future.

2. The future occupational plans of the female high school seniors interviewed fell mainly into two occupational categories. Four out of every 10 of the white and black females planned to enter "professional" occupations. Professional occupations chosen most frequently were teacher and registered nurse, respectively. Office secretary and typist were most frequently selected as preferable occupations in the "clerical and sales" category. More than 3 out of 10 respondents planned on "clerical and sales" jobs.

3. The educational plans of the black and white rural high school seniors were found to be similar. Slightly less than 7 out of every 10 of the male respondents planned to continue their education in some manner after high school. Almost half of all the students expected to obtain at least one college degree in the future.

4. Black and white females were found to have somewhat different plans for their educational future. Proportionately more black females (88 per cent) than white females (74 per cent) planned additional educational training after high school. Furthermore, more black females (28 per cent) planned to attend graduate school than white females (7 per cent). However, it was found that more white females than black females planned on just graduating from a four-year college.

5. Overall, black and white males were found to have similar residence plans for the future. Slightly more than 6 out of every 10 of the black and white students expected to reside in an urban area. However, black males were found to be more predisposed toward living in large metropolitan areas, while white males generally expected to reside in smaller urban areas. Of the rural males planning on remaining in rural areas, approximately three-fourths planned non-farm residences. Only 9 per cent of the white males and 7 per cent of the black males anticipated farm residences for the future.

6. Substantially more black females (85 per cent) than white females (64 per cent) planned on residing in urban areas. Black females also planned on living in large metropolitan areas in greater numbers than did white females. White females displayed a greater tendency for planning on residing in rural farm and non-farm areas than did their Negro counterparts.

7. Proportionately more black males than white males desired to get married at an older age. More than half of all black students interviewed preferred to marry at the age of 25 or over. Only one-third of the white males held similar age preferences for marriage. The majority of the white males indicated that marriage was desirable between the ages of

20 and 24. Marriage before 20 years of age was desired by approximately 5 per cent of all males interviewed.

8. The vast majority of the white and black females indicated that marriage was desirable between the ages of 20 and 24. However, there was a distinct tendency for white females to desire marriage at an earlier age than did black females. Twenty per cent of the white females, in contrast with 7 per cent of the black females, thought marriage was desirable before the age of 20. On the other hand, 30 per cent of the black females, opposed to 6 per cent of the white females, desired to be married at the age of 25 or later.

9. The majority of both the black and white male respondents expected to have from two to four children in their future families. Approximately only 1 out of every 10 males expected to have as many as five or more children. Similarly, approximately only 1 out of 10 males anticipated having only one child or none in the future.

10. Proportionately more white females expected to have five or more children, while proportionately more black females anticipated having only two children.

11. The youngsters showed overwhelming concern for education and less concern for big earnings, and the possession of material things, in contrast to many of the accepted "cliches" of American goal orientations commonly noted in social literature. Still less concern was shown for founding a family and having children, if compared with other things. All this demands further exploration in regard to the present crisis of younger generations in America.